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NCCJ WORKSHOPPERS' NEWS ITEMS

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This summer NCCJ will cooperate with 47 universities and colleges in the ever popular workshop program. Teachers and community leaders from all parts of the country will meet at the workshop of their choice to gain knowledge and share experiences.

DR. WILLIAM E. VICKERY, Director of the Commission on Educational Organizations of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, comments on:

THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN INTERGROUP EDUCATION

On the surface, the people of the United States may appear to be almost compulsive conformists to a highly standardized way of life. A more penetrating look will reveal, however, that the American people constitute today, as they always have, a pluralistic society. Literally dozens of sub-cultural groups refract, in the light of their unique group experiences, the pervasive and dominant culture pattern. There is hardly a rural district, village or town, and certainly no city, in the United States where one cannot find people of observably different cultural backgrounds living in the same geographical area and yet operating as a society on the basis of cultural traits shared in common.

As applied in the field of interracial and intercultural relations, the American Creed tends to put the whole range of such problems in a moral setting. Whenever any person has his dignity impaired or his feelings hurt, his rights, responsibilities and privileges abridged because of his group identification, the act troubles his fellow citizens' consciences. Needless to say, people vary greatly in the degree to which they suffer pangs of conscience because of acts of discrimination directed against others. Some people suffer not at all, some intensely, the majority at least to a degree that makes possible change in the direction of a more humane, rational, egalitarian social order.

Logically, the cultural themes of individualistic competition and voluntary group association seem to pose basic conflicts in values to people brought up in the American society. However, there is in the culture a gen-

erally accepted way of thinking that helps to resolve such conflicts. Americans tend to ask, "What are the moral principles, empirically derived facts and social processes needed to solve this particular problem?" They rarely ask, "What is the ideal social order and how can we bring our way of life into harmony with it?" Basic to this way of thinking is the concept that society will always change as new ideas and technical inventions impinge on it. Americans believe on the basis of considerable experience that men can direct and guide social change, modifying their behavior to fit new conditions. They do not regard themselves as helpless driftwood caught on some inexorable wave of the future. Americans are accustomed to rapid change and even enjoy it. When the rate of change becomes too rapid, they may seek to slow it down, but never to stop it.

The question, "What variations in feeling and behavior exist among the American people in regard to intergroup relationships?", cannot be answered in precise, quantitative terms. That variations do exist is plain. Some strongly believe in the principles of the American Creed and guide their intergroup behavior by those principles; others strongly uphold white supremacy and the dominance of the North European, Christian, middle class cultural sub-group. The vast majority of Americans are ambivalent in their feelings and behavior, acting in some circumstances according to the tenets of the American Creed and in other situations according to the generally accepted, hostile stereotypes directed against minority groups. It seems reasonable to conclude that the gains of the last twenty years represent some change in opinion on the part of the ambivalent majority. There appears to be a continuing shift in sentiment from racism and ethnocentrism toward interracial and intercultural understanding and acceptance. This shift, though sufficient to bring about the observed changes in a relatively short period of time, has not been great enough to eliminate racial and cultural prejudices as an important feature of the American cultural pattern.

Work with experienced teachers who enroll in special courses or workshops in intergroup education has given some indication of points at which their previous educa-

tion has proved inadequate. These points include:

1. Knowledge and skill in applying the principles of learning theory and curriculum construction to everyday classroom work.
2. Understanding of and skill in providing for the social growth of children as related to their physical, intellectual and emotional development.
3. Knowledge of and skill in applying group processes in classroom teaching and in the leadership of adult groups.
4. Knowledge of the social, political, and economic structures of the community and the influence of group memberships on a person's behavior.
5. Knowledge of and skill in using special materials and techniques of instruction applicable in intergroup education, especially materials and methods applicable in changing feelings and attitudes.

From the data at hand we are forced to conclude that relatively few teachers in America are prepared to apply the knowledge provided by modern research to the solution of intergroup problems. This statement does not imply that present school programs of intergroup education are futile. Rather, it emphasizes that a great deal more could be done if teachers were adequately prepared to use the knowledge, materials and methods of instruction that are already at hand.

IMPORTANT NEW PUBLICATIONS

EDUCATION IN A TRANSITION COMMUNITY by Jean D. Gramba. (Intergroup Education Pamphlet) *National Conference of Christians and Jews*, (Revised 1958).

Discussion of the problem to be faced in view of the Supreme Court decision declaring segregation in schools unconstitutional. Material organized with needs of the public schools in mind with constructive suggestions for school administrators, teachers, parents and community leaders.

EMOTIONAL DYNAMICS AND GROUP CULTURE; EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES OF INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP BEHAVIOR by Dorothy Stock and Herbert A. Thelen. *National Training Laboratories*, 1958.

Research carried out at summer sessions of the NTL at Bethel, discusses "efforts to conceptualize and report social inventions in the areas of group behavior and individual and group change."

SHARE YOUR WORKSHOP EXPERIENCES WITH YOUR FRIENDS. ENCOURAGE THEM TO ATTEND A WORKSHOP THIS SUMMER.

INTERGROUP RELATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES.

A compilation of source materials and service organizations published by The National Council of Women of the United States, 345 East 46th Street, New York 17, New York, (Revised edition 1959).

MENTAL HEALTH AND HUMAN RELATIONS IN EDUCATION by Louis Kaplan. *Harper and Brothers*, 1959.

"This textbook has sought to synthesize current knowledge and experience regarding mental health and human relations, and stimulate teachers, parents, and school officials to direct their efforts toward building a generation of youth who not only are well informed, but who can use their education for the enrichment of their own lives and the betterment of mankind."

PIOUS AND SECULAR AMERICA by Reinhold Niebuhr. Scribner, 1958.

A collection of essays in which Dr. Niebuhr examines, with close attention to concrete problems, the interrelation of religion with the social and political life of America.

RACIAL AND CULTURAL MINORITIES by George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger. *Harper and Brothers*, (Revised 1958).

Analysis of racial and cultural relations in the United States. Causes, consequences, and the reduction of prejudice are discussed and the latest research in the area is evaluated. Descriptions of the social structure of minority groups, particularly the Negro and Jewish groups, are treated comprehensively, with attention given to economic status, family patterns and education.

SOCIOMETRY IN GROUP RELATIONS by Helen Hall Jennings. *American Council on Education*, Washington, D.C., (Revised 1959).

Work guide for elementary and secondary school teachers. Basic introduction to the use of sociometric techniques for determining interpersonal relations in the classroom.

UP FROM PUERTO RICO by Elena Padilla. *Columbia University Press*, 1958.

Problems of America's newest minority, the Puerto Ricans, as they face cultural change in New York slum areas and react to social pressures of American life and to social governmental organizations.